

Work Life Balance: A Challenge for Employees in Indian IT and ITES Industry

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Abstract:

More and more staff are going through the disputes between their private and professional positions in an age of globalization. They have job obligations on the one hand and family obligations on the other. This generates a confrontation between their commitments to work and to live, which leads to increased stress. Not only does a bad “Work-life balance” affect staff, it also affects employers. Chronic stress level leads to low efficiency. The operating habits have also altered with the development of technology. Employees now use their smartphones, tablets and laptops from a distant place. Although this has significantly contributed to the flexibility of job, the lines of private and work life are blurred. In India, the IT & ITES sector has long been liberated from labor regulations to accelerate its rapid development and worldwide market capability. Although this is a thorough argument for sustaining and expanding economic growth in the aftermath of our developing economy, it still requires to be checked if the pressure is not carried by the workforce of the industry. Keeping in view of the challenges faced by the employees of in IT & ITES industry the researcher has taken Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh as a sample to study the work life balance, where more than 10,000 employees are working.

Keywords: Work life balance, work-family balance, work culture, IT & ITES industry

Introduction:

“Work-life balance” of work practices is concerned with offering staff with the scope to balance what they do in the workplace with the duties and concerns they have outside the workplace and thus balance the conflicting demands of job and home by meeting their own and their employers' needs. The phrase “Work-life balance” has substituted 'family-friendly policy' in large part. As Kodz et al (2002)¹ describes the “Work-life balance” principles: 'There ought to be a balance between the work of an employee and the life outside the workplace, and therefore this balance should be fit and active.

In the research carried out by the “Work Foundation (2003b)”, which emphasized that “Work-life balance” is all about staff reaching a satisfactory equilibrium between job and pro-work tasks that are developmental responsibilities and broader care duties, and other activities and considerations. The Work Foundation proposes that critical consideration be given to the realistic day-to-day company and associated needs. However, if organisations stay firm in choosing the variety of work-life alternatives, it should be ensured that they are made accessible to employees even on a collective basis, such as flexi-time agreements, or on an individual level, such as temporary working agreements. Furthermore, the danger of career disruption is a prevalent real excuse for bad kick-up of “Work-life balance” agreements to distrust the response of line

executives. Line support will have to be persuaded that balancing measures for work-life are essential and pay off in aspects of enhanced commitment.

“The Work Foundation” (2003b) “Work-life balance” study acknowledged that employers' most prevalent “Work-life balance” policies were part-time work (90%), family / emergency leave (85%) and overall unpaid leave (78%). Formal strategies are most likely to be found in organisations in the government and voluntary industry (35%) and less likely to be found in production (14%). Resistance to management is the most prevalent challenge encountered in the implementation of “Work-life balance” strategies. “Work-life balance” strategies assist address the low morale and elevated stress levels that lead to issues with retention as staff feel exhausted at home between job and duties. The study undertaken by the Institute of Employment Studies (Kodz et al, 2002) recognized workers who, increasing access to flexible work provisions, stayed longer with their companies.

INDIAN IT & ITES INDUSTRY:

Due to its stupendous development over the past century, the Indian IT / ITES sector has become the world's envy. This has become one of modern India's biggest success stories as it hadn't existed just two decades earlier. As a whole, the IT sector has put India as a significant knowledge-based economy and outsourcing hub on the world map. Segment Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is an sector in itself that has played a crucial role in fueling the economic growth of the country. It is probably the most global of any Indian sector and has developed international quality benchmarks, demonstrating to the globe that Indian businesses can compete worldwide and gain value. By making an active direct and indirect contribution to the multiple socio-economic parameters such as employment and living standards, the sector had affected people's life. It has also played a major part in transforming the picture of India into a country of creative entrepreneurs and a global player in offering world-class technology alternatives and business services. It is the responsibility of the IT-BPO industry to create important job possibilities in the economy. According to information published by the Ministry of Labor and Employment, almost one million jobs were developed in India during 2010-11, 70% of which were from the IT and BPO industries. It is anticipated that direct jobs in the IT-BPO industry will expand by more than 9% to achieve 2,77 million. Furthermore, multiple industry specialists think that the Indian IT industry's workforce will reach 30 million by 2020, and it is anticipated that this sunrise industry will continue to grow. IT services exports (including Engineering Research and Design (ER&D) and software items) remain the biggest employer in the industry, accounting for almost 47% of total direct jobs, BPO exports account for about 32% of total industrial jobs and the remaining 22% for national IT-BPO.

This industry is also accountable for allowing extra 8.9 million individuals to be employed in different related industries such as catering, safety, transportation, housekeeping, etc., and is projected to have expanded by 19% in the FY2020. According to the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), India's outsourcing sector has experienced a rebound and recorded better than anticipated development. The power of India is primarily due to low personnel expenses, a extremely qualified and English-speaking workforce. The favorable policy climate and support of the government has also made India a natural and popular option for clients looking for outsourced services. The Indian government is making a diligent effort to promote ITES and the nation is well placed to take advantage of the ITES market and become a main hub for ITES services. In reality, the IT & ITES sector has been recorded as one of the main driving forces fueling India's financial development and its contribution to the domestic GDP has

risen from 1.2 percent in 1997-98 to an approximately 7.5 percent in 2011-12. IT has developed as a significant contributor to India's GDP and plays a crucial role in driving economic growth in terms of jobs, promoting exports and generating income.

Review of Literature:

Muhammad Umer, Muhammad Akram Naseem (2011) in their study on “Employees Retention (Human Capital) in Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Industry aspires to investigate the impact of variables (career development, supervisor support, work environment, work life balance) on employee retention. To conclude, the study and analysis indicated that these variables have considerable and positive impact on employee retention”.

Off shoring Study Report stated the behavioral psychiatrist's view that there was no efficient mechanism for curbing stress entirely as a person needs to comprehend work-related hazards and discover methods and means to overcome stress.

Business.inquirer.net evaluates that the elevated salaries provided in the outsourcing business process industry are incapable of persuading mid-level managers to remain in their employment as rewards for "quality of life" have become a concern.

Best obesity solutions. Com pointed out that the current scenario of BPO businesses lacks appropriate agreements or training modules to provide staff with a good work life. It also reveals that in most of the BPO companies' employee problems are treated with care through medical allowance, regular health check-ups and counseling. In a separate study Best solutions for obesity assesses the viewpoint shared by one of the heads of a BPO company saying that employees with high levels of attrition can not afford to be negligent about their requirements as BPOs are deemed a gateway to a globe of economic liberty for fresher's, but the path is paved with pitfalls. The price of performance stress, rigid quality standards, uneven hours of job and night shifts sometimes overshadow the employer's advantages. It also looks at the study published by Hay Group, a worldwide management consulting company that attrition rates are about 7.8 percentage points greater in India's profitable BPO industry than in other sectors.

The Economic Times (2008) in the Revival Life study covering the employees of one of the Mumbai based BPO from the period December 2006 to June 2007 reported that “ 50% of employees were normal, 40% of them had anxiety, 27% suffers with depression and only 10 % had the stress. The proportion of those suffering simultaneously with stress, anxiety and depression was 20 %”.

Copperwiki.org quoted BPO / Call center customers based in Western Europe and agents from areas of Asia and South East Asia to maintain lengthy working hours to suit customers. Work throughout the night outcomes in a biological pattern shift leading to issues such as fatigue, sleeplessness, and fatigue. These problems arise due to high pay packets being offered to young people who are straight out of college opting for a career with new found financial independence resulting in a bundle of problems such as drinking, smoking and other unhealthy adult relationships at the workplace. The article concludes that high job stress of an employee is also leading to the problems of various health disorders.

Off shoring times.com estimates that jobs in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector are certainly associated with elevated stress rates owing to elevated target deadlines, monotonous nature of work and night shifts. Srinivas Subbarao (2012) described the employee's perception of “Work-life balance” in the Andhra Pradesh state jute sector.

Think HR think CHRM (2019) notes that constant stress and long premature hours make it hard for an employee's life to keep a work life balance. Dejected with their family life, it's hard for the staff to deliver excellent outcomes.

Objectives:

1. To collect the opinion of the sample respondents of ITES industry on the work life balance in the select ITES companies in Visakhapatnam.
2. To examine the impact on work life balance on the sample respondents of select ITES Industries in Visakhapatnam.

Methodology:

In order to understand the impact of demographic variables on the work life balance, the investigator thoroughly evaluated the primary data to determine if there is any important variation in the respondents' opinion. Here, through Multiple Linear Regression, the investigator evaluated the outcomes and derived the important autonomous variable (population factors). Using Z-tests or ANOVA tests, the investigator evaluated the corresponding important independent variable to determine the extent (scale) of variation in the respondent's view.

Analysis of multiple linear regression was successful in studying the impact of demographic variables on the equilibrium of work life. The model's regression equation observes the autonomous variable's power in predicting the dependent variable. It was thought that a linear connection exists between the demographic variables obtained below and the probability of their connection with work life balance being studied. An assessment of regression was carried out with work life balance and the 8 autonomous variables (respondent population factors).

The equation of multiple regression has been provided below.

$$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \dots + b_nX_n$$

Where Y is the dependent variable and X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n are independent variables

b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n are the slopes or constant values of the independent variables X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n

b_0 is the intercept

In addition, Z tests & ANOVA tests on the work life balance variable and the demographic data(factors) of the respondent were conducted to determine the significant difference in the respondent's opinion.

With just the assistance of Individual value plots and box plots, the results resulting from the analysis are discussed intricately and explained.

Sample:

The universe for the present study is the employees working in the selected IT & ITES companies located in this topographical area and the sampling frame selected for the study covers an approximate employee base of over 7500 professionals working in Visakhapatnam District of Andhra Pradesh. After debates with the various HR executives, approximately 10 percent of the numerical intensity of the sample frame was fingered desirable and a sample size of 750

participants was therefore set for the research as a sample size of this size provides a statistical precision of ± 5 percent and is often regarded the most budget-effective sample size. In order to show the variation, four different categories (process analyst, team leaders, supervisors and managers) of employees were included in the sample size.

Of the 750 sample participants selected for the research, 600 (80%) were selected from the category of system analyst (entry and senior level), 75% (10%) were selected from the category of team leader, 60% (8%) from the group of managers and 15% (2%) from the group of managers. Quota sampling technique is the sampling method taken for the research. The pilot survey participants were also included in the actual size of the sample for evaluation purposes.

Analysis of respondent's opinions on Work Life Balance in IT & ITES Industry:

Table - 1 Showing the respondents opinion on the Work Life Balance

Work Life Balance	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My company frequently sponsors sports and organizes games, events, social activities and I enjoy participating.	27.9	55	9.5	7	0.5
I am pleased with the organization's recreational amenities to enhance the quality of work life.	30.8	57.7	3.8	6.7	1
My schedule of job is sufficiently flexible and I can fulfill the deadlines.	36.1	44.1	3	15.2	1.5
Without getting to go to my boss for everything I can operate independently.	29.6	47.7	3.7	16.7	2.3
In my company, managers and team leaders delegate work effectively and fairly handles employee work-related issues	27.6	48.2	2.8	9	12.4
I can balance my family and my working life	32.3	47.7	2	10.4	7.7
Average	30.72	50.08	4.13	10.84	4.23

"Work-life balance" can be described as the equilibrium between the life of an individual and the environment and private assets such as family, society, employer and profession. Due to aligned technological, demographic and organizational changes, the "Work-Life Balance" of today has become a contentious problem. "Work Life Balance" plays a critical role in operating the policies and processes of the company effectively. "Work-life equilibrium" is the stability defined by balancing an individual's life's complexity and dynamism with environmental and personal

resources such as family, community, employer, occupation, geography, information, economy, personality, or values.

In table -1, the respondents' general view on the "Work Life Balance" aspect is elicited. From the table it is noted that an average of 50.08% of the total participants agreed with the above statements, while 30.72% highly agreed with the same. Optionally, 15.07% of participants expressed negative opinions with these statements, whereas the remaining 4.13% of participants did not express opinions in this respect.

According to the survey results, out of the total respondents, 82.9% of them have agreed that their company frequently organizes / sponsors sports, games, events, social activities and they enjoy participating, while only 7.5% of them disagreed with the above. A majority 88.5% of the respondents have accepted that they are satisfied with the recreational facilities provided by the company to improve their quality of work life, while only 7.7% of them differed in their opinion.

In fact, 80.2% of the respondents have agreed that company's work schedule is flexible enough and employees are able to meet the deadlines, while a meager portion of 16.7% respondents have disagreed with the same.

Similarly, an average 77.3% of the respondents are in agreement with the fact that employees can work independently without having to go to the boss for everything, while 19% of them have disagreed for the same.

In addition to this, an average of 75.8% respondents have agreed that the managers and team leaders delegate work effectively and handles employee work-related issues satisfactorily, while 21.4% of them have disagreed in this regard. An average of 80 % respondents agreed that employees are able to balance family and work life, while 18.1% of the respondents have disagreed with the same.

During the survey, the researcher has observed that most of the employees working in Indian & multinational companies have tight work schedules, work at odd hours and handle many challenging tasks as per their job profile. Further, many of the employees desperately expressed the need for stress busters, activities, and recreational games to cope up with the day to day pressures of their work life.

The respondents working in different shifts have rightly pointed out that their companies of late; have been providing many facilities to balance the work and family issues, prioritizing work schedules and flexibility in meeting deadlines.

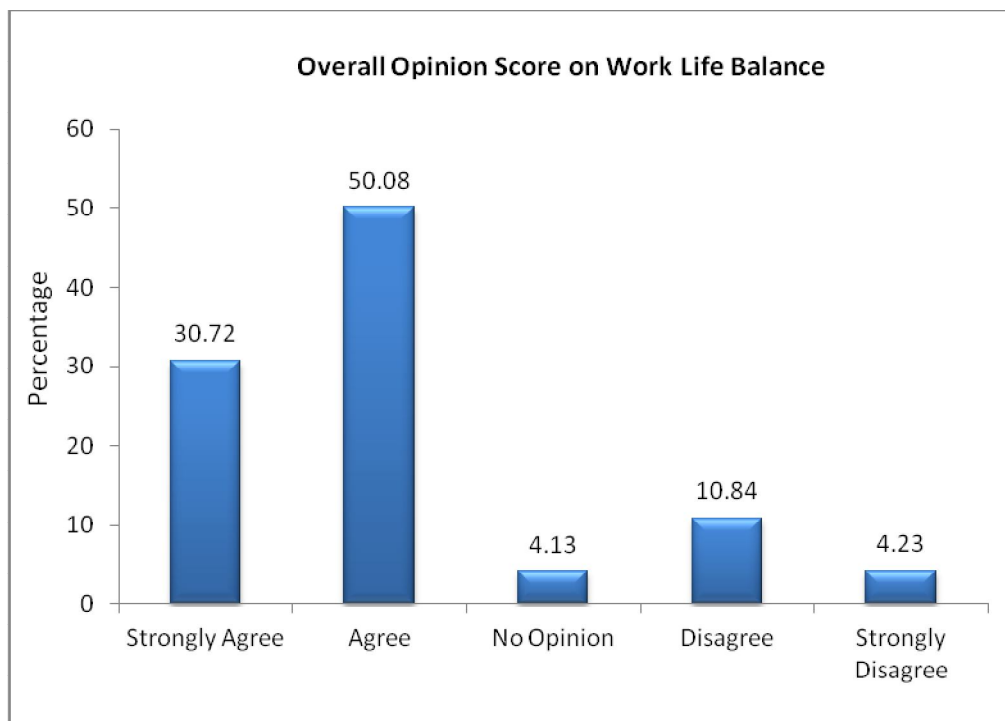
Here in this survey, the majority of the respondents were of the opinion that IT & ITES companies have been actively encouraging socio-cultural activities, games and sports to all employees which are helping in motivating the employee to contribute more to the organization. The respondents have also agreed that there is clear work delegation and work-related issues concerning the employees are fairly dealt with.

In addition, one of the HR Managers notified that some of the human resource-related problems receiving significant attention in the BPOs are working circumstances, management of the organisational environment-work relationships, empowerment of the workforce and "Work-life balance".

Most of the respondents have indicated that there were able to balance the work, family life and work independence absolutely while few were not able to balance their work life

Hence it can be inferred that the employees agree to the view there is absolute balance of work, and family life in their respective organizations.

The overall opinion of the respondents on "Work Life Balance " is diagrammatically represented below in P-1.



P-1: Bar chart indicating the employee opinion on Work Life Balance

Influence of demographic factors on "Work Life Balance " dimension.

The investigator used "Multiple Linear Regression Analysis" to examine the impact of demographic variables of participants on Work Life Balance. After figuring out the corresponding "important variable" from demographic factors, he introduced z-test & ANOVA testing on these variables to determine the variation in the respondents ' view.

Table-2 Sample ITES Industry shows below the impact of demographic variables on Work Life Balance

Predictor	Coef	SE Coef	T	P
Constant	3.4461	0.1883	18.30	0.000
Gender	0.04342	0.04249	1.02	0.307
Age	- 0.02279	0.03220	- 0.71	0.479

Marital Status	0.05570	0.04432	1.26	0.209
Qualification	- 0.00871	0.03851	- 0.23	0.821
Type of company	0.14105	0.04255	3.31	0.001
Work hours	0.06364	0.02390	2.66	0.008
Work experience	0.03834	0.04386	0.87	0.382
Monthly Income	-0.02507	0.02536	-0.99	0.323

$R^2 = 3.7\%$	P-Value 0.005	Significant
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The p-value (0.005) indicates that the model estimated by the regression procedure is important at the point of 0.05 in the above regression in table-2. The R^2 value shows that the predictors explain the variance of 3.7 percent between the respondents' autonomous factors (gender, age, marital status, qualification, type of business, working hours, work experience and monthly earnings) and the dependent variable's job life equilibrium.' This value indicates that the model fits well with the information.

The p-values for the estimated company type and working hours coefficients are less than 0.05, suggesting that they are substantially associated with work life balance. In addition, the p-values for sex, age, marital status, qualification, job experience, and monthly earnings are higher than 0.05, specifying that they are not associated with α -level 0.05 job life equilibrium.

Overall, this shows a important impact on the dependent variable' job life balance' revealing the variability in the respondents' view, justified by two independent variables, namely business type and working hours. This indicates that it is more suitable to have a model with the above important independent variables.

Additional Z and ANOVA tests on the corresponding important independent variables were administered below (Table-2 & Table-3), i.e. type of business and working hours to determine the degree of variation in respondents' view on job life equilibrium.

Table-3 shown below the influence of demographic factors (type of company)
on Work Life Balance in sample ITES Industry

Type of Company	n	Mean	S.D	Z-Value	P-Value	Decision
Indian	238	3.8403	.51234	-3.291	0.001	Significant
Multinational	360	3.9755	.47721			

The above table-3 describes that there is a substantial distinction in the average number of participants representing both kinds of businesses on "working life equilibrium." The average

opinion counts of both respondent categories (Indian and multinational firms) are very near to '4,' which obviously reflects the amount of 'agreement' on the work life balance.

This affirmative perception is further reinforced by z-value and its associated p-value, which is found to be important at the point of 0.05 percent, representing the fact that the respondents' view is not unanimous regardless of the sort of business they operate.

Furthermore, we can say that the participants operating in the multinational enterprise were more optimistic than the participants operating in the Indian enterprise shown in the individual value plot diagram.

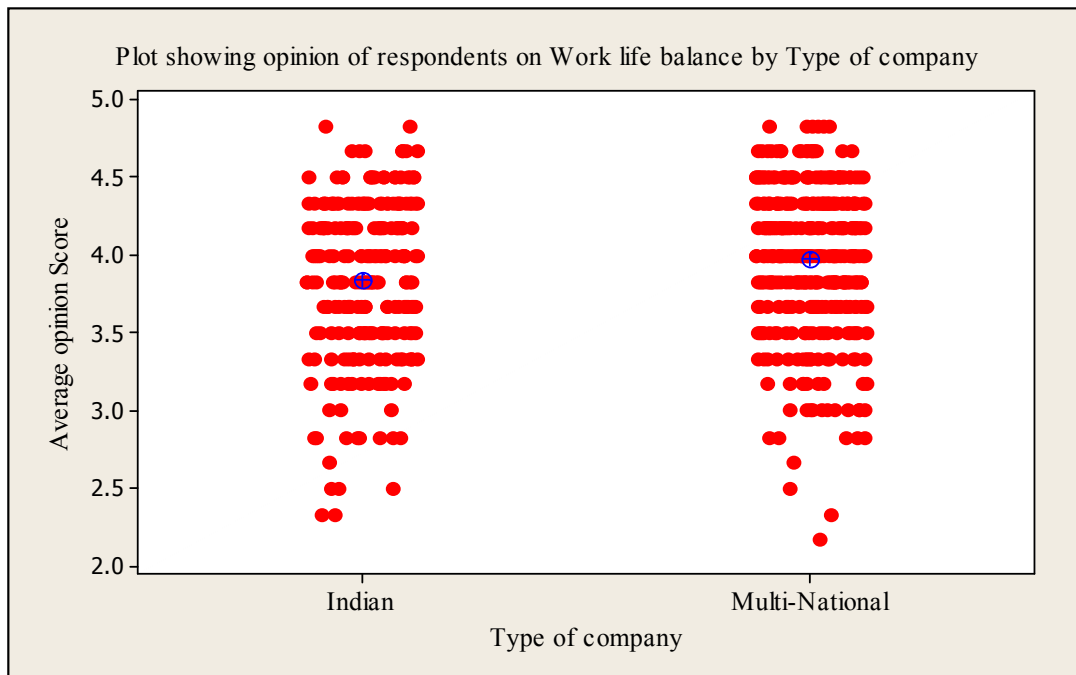


Figure 1: showing the individual value plot of Work Life Balance by type of company

Because the calculated p-value 0.001 is less than the meaning point of 0.05, indicating a substantial variety in respondents' view. It is therefore inferred that there is a substantial distinction in respondents' view on "job life equilibrium" depending on the sort of business they operate.

Table-4 shown below the influence of demographic factors (work hours) on Work Life Balance in sample ITES Industry

Work hours	n	Mean	S.D	F-Value	P-Value	Decision
Day Shift	71	3.8263	.52737	2.446	0.063	Not Significant
Night Shift	292	3.8944	.51121			
Day & Night	155	3.9860	.46445			
Rotation	80	3.9812	.45081			

The table above-4 reveals the respondents' understanding of the "Work-life balance" aspect, based on their working hours(shifts). From the overview, it is noted that the mean view counts on the 'job life equilibrium' of all four classifications of participants employed in separate working hours (shifts) shown above neutral level view (far higher than neutral and near to agreeable level). In addition, it is consistent with the results of the f-value and its respective p-value, which shows that there is no important (5 percent meaning level) distinction in the respondent's view between the distinct patterns of working hours(shifts).

We can conclude, in other words, that the respondents' understanding of all categories is unanimous. Moreover, it is noted that more optimistic view is revealed by the average opinion rating of participants employed in day & night and rotation shifts.

In the individual value plot diagram showing obviously the same pattern, the same is shown below. The two outliers shown in the box plot diagram show the pessimistic view provided by a night shift worker and another work on job life balance rotation.

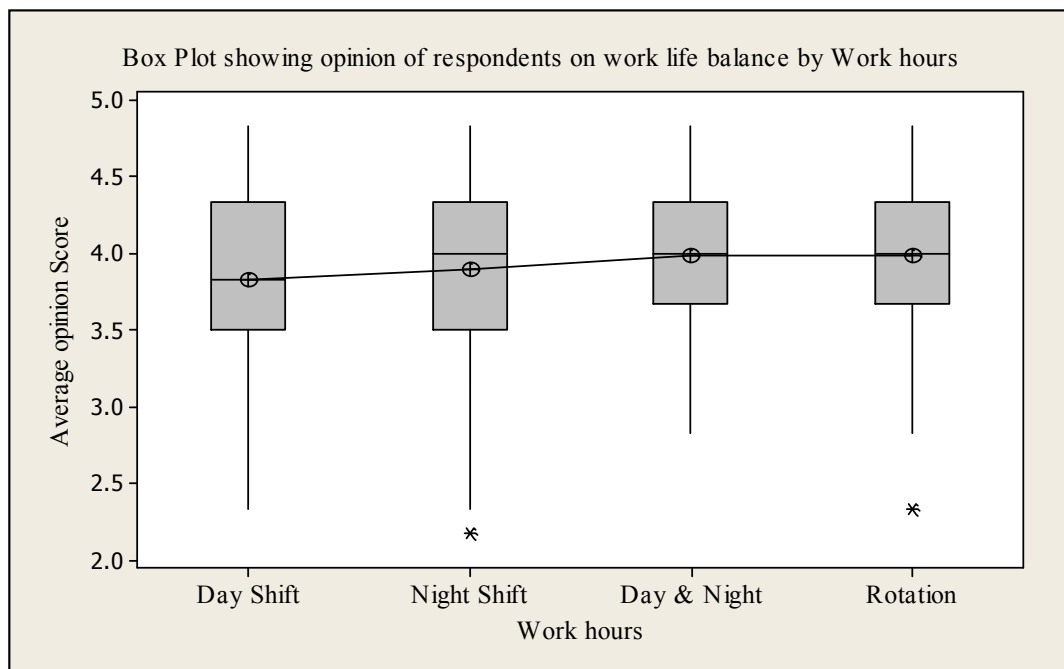


Figure -2: showing the box plot of Work Life Balance by Work Hours

Because the calculated p-value 0.063 is greater than the meaning point of 0.05, which shows no important variation in the view of the respondent. Therefore, it is inferred that there is no important distinction in respondents' view based on their work hours on the work life balance aspect.

Findings:

IT & ITES organizations should introduce interventions to help employees manage the competing demands of work and family life, while being dynamic at the work place. In this dimension the respondents were questioned regarding work schedules and its flexibility, balancing personal & work life, bosses' interference in work, quality of work life, recreational facilities and managers'

effectiveness in handling issues of work related stress. The data divulges that an average of 50.08 per cent of the total respondents have agreed in favor of the above issue, whereas, 30.72 per cent of them have strongly agreed with the same. Further, 15.07 per cent of the respondents have negatively opined on these aspects, while the remaining 4.13 per cent of them have not opined in this regard.

With regard to work life balance practice the respondents were questioned on work schedules, flexible work hours, balancing personal & work life, boss's interference in work, quality of work life, recreational facilities and manager's effectiveness in handling work related stress issues. The data discovered that an average of 80.8 % of the total respondents was satisfied with the current practices. They opined that it is a dire need of the hour for perfect equilibrium of work and personal life to be maintained especially for the employees of the ITES Sector. The respondents were asked to present their viewpoint on the aspects of work culture from the point of view of employee abilities in sharing ideas, contributions, suggestions, employee views and free flow of communication. Questions were also posed on ways of fostering healthy working atmosphere, work culture, team work, employee participation, commitment and other socialization activities at work place. In response to the above, the results reveal that an average of 89.7 per cent of the total respondents had placed high optimism on the existing policies. The employees felt that the contribution of an employee augments only when the said elements are all placed in tandem.

Suggestions:

The IT & ITES companies should plan facilities such as providing day care centers, crèches and arranging family get-together's for sensitizing the spouses' attitude towards recognizing the importance of work being performed by their counterpart at the workplace. They should also be given flexible leave, flexi work timings / shifts, allowing compassionate and urgency leave in order to meet the diverse requirements of employees associated with ITES sector. Providing healthcare for self/family and sufficient rest required to maintain mental balance are the key elements essential for an employee to fulfill his/her duties diligently. Employers should think of offering better working hours, performance based incentives, tuition fee reimbursement for pursuing higher studies, service recognition incentives and awards to their employees. They should also do horizontal job rotation among the employees across processes in order to reduce job boredom. The ITES companies should view the concept of work life balance as a business proposition as it would carry the business forward with employees and families.

Conclusion:

The results demonstrate a significant influence by two independent variables namely type of company and work hours on work life balance revealing the variation in the opinion of respondents. Among these variables, type of company was tested and found to be significant. The other significant independent variable work hours were also tested not found to be significant. Training programs on emotional intelligence will not only help the employee to improve their work life balance, but also enable them to contribute more productively. The management should look beyond the aspects of active employee engagement, good work culture and work life balance with an objective to reduce job stress and to increase the employee job satisfaction levels.

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